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# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

## Borough of Bridgwater

For the year ending 31st December, 1925.

BY

G. W. Harvey Bird, M.A., M.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P

*Acland & Son, General Printers, North Street, Bridgwater*

**Annual Report of M.O.H.**

*Please circulate as quickly as possible.*

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# ANNUAL REPORT, 1925

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Bridgwater,
*15th April 1926*

**To the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Bridgwater.**

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In submitting this my Annual Report for the year 1925, it is necessary for me, in accordance with Circular 648 of the Ministry of Health to deal with the Natural and Social Conditions and the General Provision of Public Health and Sanitary Services in the Borough, not only for the year 1925, but for the preceding four years in so far as I am able, and where it is considered desirable. The report is known as a survey report and a similar report is to be issued at intervals of five years. The intermediate reports dealing only with the work during the year under review.

The subjects covered by the present report are fully treated under their respective headings and I will here only draw attention to the progress made during the last five years in many directions, such as Housing, Water Supply, Maternity and Child Welfare, improved conditions at the Isolation Hospital, Ambulance facilities and provision for remedying defective vision in school children.

As regards the subject which I regard as of paramount importance, namely Housing, a programme of new buildings has been adopted and is being vigorously pushed forward by the Council, and there is good reason to hope that the housing conditions in the Borough will in time be vastly improved.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

G. W. HARVEY BIRD.
Medical Officer of Health.

## NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

### Area.

This was extended in 1896 to 961 acres and is now somewhat congested, there being 17 persons to the acre. Little land remains within the boundary suitable for building sites and this matter is receiving the consideration of the Council.

### Population.

This was 16,802 at the 1911 census and 15,962 at the 1921 census while the Registrar General's estimate for mid-year 1925 is 16,410. No new enterprise of magnitude has been commenced during the last five years nor has there been a demand for additional labour within the Borough so that the population has not been swelled by persons moving into the town.

### Occupations.

Male labour is chiefly absorbed in the Brick and Tile industry, the Railways, Engineering Works and Wicker Works.

Female labour is chiefly occupied in factory work, principally in shirt and collar manufacture. A lesser number is engaged in making light wicker articles.

It has not been observed that any local employment has had a detrimental effect on the health of the workers.

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## PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

The town is a very ancient one and a Free Charter of Borough was granted in 1200.

It is a big agricultural market town and shopping centre. It is divided into two parts by the River Parrett the sides being joined by a single arched bridge. Lying on the main road between Bristol and the West of England, the town is known widely by travellers for its narrow streets which at times get rather congested. A great scheme would be necessary to remedy this but with the increase of road traffic this will undoubtedly have to receive consideration in the near future.

The Eastern side of the town is much lower than the Western side and in this area lies mostly the clay from which the bricks and tiles are made for which the town is known. This clay sub soil is naturally damp and it is not surprising to find damp houses in this area.

On the western side the sub soil is chiefly gravel with some clay near the river. A little more than a mile from the river stretches an open hilly country and it is in this part that building is mostly in operation.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

### For the Borough.

| | |
|---|---|
| Population, mid-year 1925. ... ... | 16,410 |
| Density of population per acre ... ... | 17 |
| Births registered, including illegitimate, ... | 292 |
| Births registered as illegitimate ... ... | 10 |
| Birth Rate ... ... ... | 17.79 |
| Birth Rate, illegitimate ... ... | 0.60 |
| Deaths, after correction for transfers ... | 229 |
| Death Rate, crude ... ... ... | 13.9 |
| Death Rate, standardised (.840) ... ... | 11.7 |
| Deaths of Infants under one year ... ... | 24 |
| Infant Mortality, per 1,000 births ... ... | 82.2 |
| Deaths, female, in consequence of childbirth— | |
| (a) from sepsis ... ... | 1 |
| (b) other causes ... ... | 1 |
| Deaths from Measles, all ages ... ... | 1 |
| Deaths from Whooping Cough, all ages ... | 5 |
| Deaths from Diarrhœa, under two years ... | 2 |
| Case rate infectious diseases per 1,000 population | |
| Scarlet Fever ... ... ... | 3.1 |
| Diphtheria ... ... ... | 1.6 |
| Puerperal Fever ... ... | 0.06 |
| Erysipelas ... ... ... | 0.30 |

### For England and Wales.

| | |
|---|---|
| Death Rate ... ... ... | 12.2 |
| Birth Rate ... ... ... | 18.3 |
| Infant Mortality per 1,000 births ... ... | 75 |
| Case rate infectious diseases per 1,000 living. | |
| Scarlet Fever ... ... ... | 2.36 |
| Diphtheria ... ... ... | 1.23 |
| Puerperal Fever ... ... | 0.06 |
| Erysipelas ... ... ... | 0.39 |

## GENERAL STATISTICS.

### For the Borough.

| | |
|---|---|
| Area, Statute acres. ... ... ... | 961 |
| Population (1921 census) ... ... | 15,962 |
| Number of families or separate occupiers, 1921 | 3,911 |
| Number of inhabited houses, 1921 ... ... | 3,829 |
| Rateable value. ... ... ... | £69,888 |
| Sum represented by a penny rate ... .... | £270 |

**Death Rate.**

| Year. | Death Rate. | Number of Deaths. |
|---|---|---|
| 1921 | 12.1 | 193 |
| 1922 | 12.53 | 202 |
| 1923 | 10.9 | 178 |
| 1924 | 12.5 | 206 |
| 1925 | 13.9 (crude) 11.7 (standardised) | 229 |

This shows an increase in the number of deaths but it must be remembered that the population has increased also. The standardising figure 0.840 given by the Registrar General for the correction of death rate gives the actual death rate for the Borough as 11.7 which is lower than the average for England and Wales. The standardising figure is given according to age and sex distribution.

**Birth Rate.**

| Year. | Birth Rate | Number of Births. |
|---|---|---|
| 1921 | 22.5 | 360 |
| 1922 | 21 | 339 |
| 1923 | 21.1 | 344 |
| 1924 | 18.9 | 312 |
| 1925 | 17.79 | 292 |

This shows a decline in actual number of births and also in the rate per 1,000 population.

**Infant Mortality.**

| Year | Rate per 1,000 births | Number of deaths under one year of age |
|---|---|---|
| 1921 | 47.2 | 17 |
| 1922 | 50 | 17 |
| 1923 | 37.8 | 13 |
| 1924 | 73.7 | 23 |
| 1925 | 82.2 | 24 |

I much regret that we have 7 per 1,000 more of our babies die before they reach the age of one year than is the average for England and Wales.

Of the 24 deaths in 1925, 11 were due to congenital defects, 8 to Bronchitis and Pneumonia and 2 to Whooping Cough.

**Unemployment and Poor Law Relief.**

Like other industrial areas Bridgwater has had the overwhelming problem of unemployment to deal with, the numbers unemployed in the last three years are as follows :

| Year | Men | Women | Young Persons | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1923 | | | | 8,412 |
| 1924 | 5760 | 1860 | 576 | 8,196 |
| 1925 | 4656 | 1644 | 468 | 6,768 |

This shows that unemployment has decreased in the area during 1925 to the extent of 1,644 as compared with 1923 and this decrease is more evident as regards male labour. The greatest number of unemployed registered at one time since 1922 was in March, 1923, when the number was 912 and the lowest number 418 was in June 1925. Owing to the slackness of the Building Trade, Brick and Tile Works and Agriculture unemployment is much heavier during the months October to March. During these months various employment schemes have been adopted by the Council.

## Poor Law Benefit,

During 1925, 146 cases received treatment at the Union Infirmary while 5 women were admitted for confinement. This Infirmary fulfils a very beneficial purpose. The medical treatment given by the Poor Law Medical Officers forms a very necessary provision for the treatment of persons of the poorer classes and many, particularly children, would not obtain medical attendance were it not for this means.

# GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

## HOSPITALS

### Tuberculosis,

The Somerset County Council provides Sanatorium accommodation for this area. During 1925 twenty-one persons suffering from Tuberculosis have been admitted to sanatoria.

### Maternity,

The Mary Stanley Training Home and District Nursing Association at 6 and 8 Castle Street has five maternity beds and during 1925 eleven cases have been admitted. The staff consists of Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, two trained Queen's Nurses all of whom are certified midwives, and eight pupils.

The Drummuir Nursing Home at Northfield also provides maternity accommodation ; the staff includes two certified midwives

Six maternity cases were admitted to the General Hospital during 1925 but the Hospital maintains no special maternity ward.

### Children.

A children's ward has been opened during 1925 at the General Hospital with twelve beds; 138 children received inpatient treatment during 1925.

The Mary Stanley Nursing Home has six cots for infants and 18 babies have received treatment during 1925. Infants are admitted to this "baby hospital" from all parts of the County. These Institutions receive no financial support from the Council, the Baby Hospital at the Mary Stanley Nursing Home being under the County Council.

### Isolation Hospital.

The hospital for infectious diseases other than Small Pox is situated at the Bridgwater Docks and is supported by the Bridgwater Town Council. It has accommodation for Scarlet Fever, 17 beds; Diphtheria, 9 beds, and other diseases 3 beds.

During the year 1925, 20 cases of Diphtheria and 62 of Scarlet Fever have received treatment.

Cases are admitted to this Hospital on application from the Bridgwater Rural District and other Districts on payment.

I am glad to be able to report that during 1925 an improvement in accommodation for the staff has been made, two living rooms having been added.

The scheme for replacing the present Gas Lighting by Electricity is receiving consideration and no doubt will be approved.

The Hospital being on too low a level to allow of draining to the Borough Sewer the question of replacing the existing Sanitary conveniences with "Elsan Type" chemical pans is receiving consideration and I hope this will be carried out during the next year.

### Small Pox

The Somerset County Council has provided a Small Pox Hospital at Bawdrip on the Polden Hills some four miles from the Town which is available for any cases arising in this area.

### Other Hospitals.

The Bridgwater General Hospital in addition to the children's ward already referred to has accommodation of 50 beds and 357 adults received inpatient treatment during 1925. This hospital is supported by voluntary subscriptions and is situated in the centre of the town facing the river and overlooking Blake Gardens.

The Hospital has recently extended its X-Ray Department and fitted an Electric Lift.

There are special departments for Massage, X-Ray and Electrical Treatment.

The Drummuir Nursing Home in Northfield provides accommodation for a few medical and surgical cases.

There is no special hospital or institution to which are admitted unmarried mothers, illegitimate or homeless children, but any such cases requiring institutional treatment would be admitted to the Union Infirmary.

## AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

### For Infectious Diseases.

A horse drawn Ambulance is provided by the Council and is available for the removal of infectious cases. This is kept in the Council yard and a horse is hired as required.

### For other uses.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that during 1925 a Motor Ambulance has become available for cases of accident and non-infectious illness, the St. John Ambulance Brigade having presented one to a Brigade Unit formed in the town.

This Ambulance is available on application to the Honorary Secretary, Mr. Arthur Wevill, 100 Wembdon Road, or the Divisional Superintendent, Mr.T. G. Davey, 5 Cecil Terrace, and in cases of urgency by telephoning to the Motor Co. No. 18 from 8 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. and to the Borough Police Station, No. 24 at night and on Sundays.

The charges are 5/- inclusive within the Borough ; outside the Borough 5/- plus 1/- per mile each way outside the boundary and waiting 1/6 per hour.

## CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES

### Maternity and Child Welfare.

This is held at St. Mary's Parish Hall, King Square, for babies on Fridays (except the first Friday in each month) from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The average attendance during 1925 was, babies 81 and mothers 70.

Ante-natal work is carried out on the first Friday in each month the average attendance being 7.

### Tuberculosis Dispensary and Clinic.

This is held at 20 King Square on Wednesdays from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### Venereal Diseases Clinic.

This is held at 20 King Square on Wednesday afternoons.

The above clinics which are provided and maintained by the Somerset County Council, are held for the purpose of consultations and treatment, and any persons can attend and receive treatment for themselves or children.

### School Clinic.

This is held at 40 High Street, it is open every morning at 9 a.m. and the School Medical Officer attends on Tuesdays and Fridays at 10 a.m.

The School Dentist attends on Friday afternoons at the same address, while the County Oculist attends as required.

The clinic is used extensively and during 1925, 470 individual children have received treatment.

The dental service is to be considerably extended during the coming year.

## PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

G. W. Harvey Bird, M.A., M.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.
Medical Officer of Health (part time),
Francis Parr, A.M.I.C.E. Chief Sanitary Inspector.
Arthur W. Good, C.R.S.I., A.R.San.I., Inspector of Meat and other Foods, Junior Sanitary Inspector.
Mary Owen Goad, S.R.N., Matron Isolation Hospital.
E. J. Goad, Disinfector (part time).

A contribution under the Public Health Act is made from the Exchequer in respect of the salaries of the Medical Officer of Health and Chief Sanitary Inspector.

The Medical Officer of Health is also School Medical Officer and Medical Officer of Health to the Port Sanitary Authority.

The Chief Sanitary Inspector is also Borough Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector to the Port Sanitary Authority.

The only change in the staff is the appointment of Mr. Good in succession of Mr. Hasell who resigned in October 1924

## PROFESSIONAL HOME NURSING.

This is done chiefly by the Bridgwater District Nursing Association who have 12 nurses available and 12,508 visits were made by them during 1925. There are also four private nurses practising in the town.

The only home nursing of infectious diseases during 1925 was in two cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum which was done by nurses from the Mary Stanley Nursing Home, their services being paid by the Council.

In cases of Measles, Whooping Cough, Bronchitis and Bronchopneumonia among infants the Health Visitor (Miss Goddard) has done untiring work which has been a boon to many sufferers.

I consider that where needed and in necessitous cases it should be possible to supply professional nursing in the patients homes.

### Midwives

The number of midwives practising in the town is 10. Four of these being members of the Mary Stanley Home, two attached to the Drummuir Nursing Home and four private midwives. The Mary Stanley Home is also a Training School for midwives and has 8 pupils.

The Council does not employ any midwives neither does it subsidise the above Homes.

The supply appears quite adequate to meet the demand.

The Maternity cases dealt with by the Mary Stanley Home during 1925 are as follows :—

| | |
|---|---|
| In the Institution ... ... | 11 |
| At the patients home— | |
| (a) with doctor ... ... | 30 |
| (b) without doctor ... ... | 144 |

## CHEMICAL WORK

Material for analysis is submitted in the case of Food and Drugs to the Western Counties Laboratories, Bristol, while pathological and bacteriological specimens are submitted to the Somerset County Council Laboratories, The results of examination of the material and specimens sent are given later in the report.

## ACTS, BYELAWS, AND REGULATIONS IN FORCE

Public Health Act, 1890.
Private Streets Works Act, 1892.
Cleansing of Footways and Pavements Byelaws, 1897
Nuisance Byelaws, 1897.
Common Lodging Houses Byelaws. 1893.
Slaughterhouse Byelaws, 1898.
Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Regulations, 1907.

It is desirable that the Public Health Act, 1907, the Public Health Act, 1925, Byelaws for Offensive Trades and Houses Let in Lodgings and Regulations for Tents, Vans and Sheds be adopted and put in force and this is being proceeded with.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

### Water

The area is served with a constant supply. The source is from the Quantock Hills some 7 miles from the town. The water is collected at Ashford in one large settling tank. It is then pumped from Ashford to the Reservoir at Wembdon about two miles from the town. Three filtering beds are provided at Ashford and two Steam Beam Pumps and one Oil Engine pump together capable of pumping 50,000 gallons per hour. The Reservoir is some 70 feet above the level of the town and the main pipes are connected to this.

The sufficiency of the supply during the past five years has been good. During the dry summer of 1921 it was producing at the lowest 20 gallons per head.

During 1924 a scheme of chlorination was adopted and a Chloronome was fixed at the pumping station. This apparatus distributes 0.0544 pounds of chlorine into every 20,000 gallons of water pumped and this has proved satisfactory.

Only one dwelling-house in the whole area is without the Corporation water and in every case the water is supplied by taps

### Possible Sources of Contamination

The water shed consists partly of pasture and arable land and partly of forest.

The question of a complete supply by gravitation is receiving consideration and arrangements for the fixing of gauges have been made.

### Rivers and Streams.

Running through the centre of the town is the River Parrett, this is a tidal river with a rise of 20 feet at the Town Bridge. The Taunton-Bridgwater Canal also runs through the town and under several roads, this is used partly for drainage and also to feed the Docks. There are several small streams which enter the river within the area.

The river and some of the streams are polluted by the entrance of crude sewage.

### Drainage and Sewerage.

The house drainage in the eastern side of the town and in the older parts of the western side is in some cases defective. Every complaint is investigated, the drain tested and if found defective relaid with stoneware collared pipes.

The sewers are in the main brick built and in most cases satisfactory, insufficient fall being the greatest difficulty, where this is the case the sewers are regularly flushed. Repair work has been carried out on the main sewer in Eastover and work has commenced on the enlargement of the Wembdon to Chilton Sewer which is to be relaid for 3,200 feet with 24 inch Stanton Hume Concrete Pipes

The sewage from the whole town enters by 10 outfalls in various parts of the river.

## Closet Accommodation.

This consist mainly of water closets. Nine dwelling-houses and one Factory were known to have pail closets and ashpit privy at the beginning of the year. Two houses and the factory have been provided with water closets and cesspits during the year and arrangements made by the Council to empty the privy of the other seven houses twice weekly. Owing to the level of these seven houses it is not practicable to connect their drainage to the Borough Sewers or to construct cesspits.

The insufficiency of the closet accommodation is being dealt with systematically under the Housing Acts by the Inspector of the District. During the year, 43 new water closets have been erected and 149 others made sufficient by providing flushing apparatus.

## Scavenging.

This is undertaken by the Surveyor, house refuse is collected in most districts twice weekly. There are very few fixed ashpits and generally the house refuse is put into a receptacle and put out for the scavenger to collect. Very few bins of a sanitary type with cover are provided, and considerable difficulty, more especially with some occupiers who have private roads at the rear of their houses, has been experienced in dealing with the nuisances arising from the depositing of house refuse.

All refuse is disposed of by tipping into pits.

## Sanitary Inspection of the area

The records given of the Sanitary Inspector's visits and work done at the end of the Report will give the number of unsanitary conditions found.

## Smoke Abatement.

Very few chimneys other than those of dwelling-houses are in the area and with one exception there has been no reason for complaint.

## Byelaws and Regulations.

This is dealt with under the heading of Acts, Byelaws and Regulations.

## Schools.

These are supplied with town's water and adequate and efficient water closets.

One school was suspected of having a Diphtheria Carrier and the same school was suspected to have had a scholar or rather scholars in attendance while suffering from Scarlet Fever. The School and Scholars were from time to time inspected, 24 swabs were taken and a positive diphtheria carrier found.

## HOUSING

### 1. General Conditions.

The outstanding feature is the shortage of good houses for the working classes. It is owing to this that many houses are still occupied which are unfit and cannot be made fit without reconstruction or structural alterations.

To meet this shortage the Council has decided to proceed with the erection of 51 houses, 20 non-parlour type and 31 parlour type, 33 of which are actually in course of erection. A further batch of 100 is receiving consideration. The Council has also added £.25 to the Government subsidy of £.75 per house to private builders

### 2. Overcrowding.

This is not considered very great as to air space. Of the 1068 houses, inspected, only 19 being found without sufficient air space.

The chief conditions causing overcrowding are the number of houses with 1 or 2 bedrooms, the fact that big families who cannot afford much rent, remain in the small low rent houses and the letting of rooms in decontrolled houses where the rent is more than the working class can afford to pay.

Action has only been taken where the house is occupied by more than one family or where the family consists partly of adult children

### 3. Fitness of Houses.

For the reason before stated there is room for improvement as regards the houses occupied by the working classes. The chief defects found are absence of ventilated food stores, insufficient water closet accommodation, insufficient water taps and waste sinks and the unsanitary condition of internal walls and ceilings.

Generally speaking it may be said that the defects are mostly attributable to the lack of proper management and supervision by the owners.

The inspecting officer makes a record of his inspections and serves a preliminary notice on the responsible person for the defects found, he then reports the conditions found to the Health Committee who sanction the serving of Statutory Notices where necessary.

It has not been necessary to carry out any work in default of the owners under the Housing Acts but three summonses have been issued for nuisances under the Public Health Act and an order of the Court in each case was obtained for the work to be done.

The chief difficulty during the year in getting the defects remedied has been in obtaining labour to do the work, some works having been held up for six months before the contractor who has received the order from the owners could proceed with the work.

Every house inspected under the Housing Acts and not unfit for human habitation by reason of its construction and situation has been provided with a separate water tap, water closet, waste sink and ventilated food store, and in most cases a separate wash-house.

### Unfit Houses and Unhealthy Areas.

In 16 Court, West Street, six unhealthy and structurally dangerous houses have been demolished and three new houses are in the course of erection on the site.

A scheme for the structural alteration of No. 4 and No. 11 Courts Albert Street, is awaiting the approval of the Ministry of Health. These Courts contain 23 houses and it is proposed to convert these into 17 houses each complete with its own conveniences at an estimated cost of £3,500, this sum including the purchase of the existing 23 houses.

The question of issuing a Closing Order on all unfit houses to prevent them being re-let is receiving consideration.

## HOUSING TABLE.

### Number of New Houses erected during the Year.

| | |
|---|---|
| (a) Total | 31 |
| (b) With State assistance under Housing Acts | |
| (1) By the Local Authority ... ... | 0 |
| (2) By other bodies or persons ... ... | 27 |

### 1. Unfit Dwelling Houses.

| | |
|---|---|
| Inspection (1) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ... ... ... ... | 1168 |
| 2. Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the (Inspection of District) Regulations 1910 or the Housing (Con) Act 1925. ... ... | 1013 |
| 3. Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation. ... ... ... | 6 |
| 4. Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation. | 704 |

### 2. Remedy of defects without service of Formal Notice.

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers. ... ... ... | 82 |

## 3. Action under Statutory Powers.

A. Proceedings under section 3 of the Housing Act, 1925.

1 Number of houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs. ... ... ... ... 549

2. Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:-

(a) By owners ... ... ... ... ... 528

(b) By Local Authority in default of owners ... 0

(c) Number of repairs in hand ... ... 21

3. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close ... ... ... 0

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

1. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... 73

2. Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:-

(a) By owners ... ... ... ... ... 69

(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners ... 0

(c) By owners by Order of the Court ... ... 3

C. Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of the Housing Act, 1925.

1 Number of representations made with a view to making closing orders ... ... ... ... 6

2 Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... ... ... 6

3 Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses having been rendered fit. ... ... ... ... 0

4 Number of dwelling houses in respect of which orders were made for demolition ... ... ... ... 6

5 Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... ... ... ... ... 6

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

### Milk Supply.

The wholesomeness of the milk produced in the area has improved during the year but furthur improvement is necessary in some cases. At the beginning of the year little consideration was in some cases shown for cleanliness of utensils, and of the milkers clothing and hands and of the cows. Inspections have been made during milking and the result is an improvement but in some cases continual supervision is necessary. The wholesomeness of the milk brought to and sold in the town can only be judged by the result of the samples submitted to bacteriological examination.

The number of retailers is more than adequate for the distribution and with the exception of about one month in the winter the supply is abundant.

Retailers premises have been regularly visited during 1925. The standard of cleanliness varies considerably, but generally this has improved. Most retailers have a separate store for milk and utensils while the serving pan is kept covered.

Cowsheds in the area are used only for milking and lying in during the winter. These are fairly well kept in most cases but two require reconstruction.

### Tuberculosis in Milk and Cattle.

No action has been taken during the year but arrangements have now been made with the Somerset County Council to examine samples from each producer.

### Graded Milks

No licence for any Graded Milk has been granted by the Council nor has any application been received. Grade 'A' milk is distributed in the town by a producer-retailer licensed by the Somerset County Council. The demand for this milk is gradually increasing and it is supplied to the Isolation Hospital and the Baby Hospital in Castle Street.

## Bacteriological Examination of Milk.

The results of the samples taken during the year are as follows:-

| No. of samples | Contained per cubic centimeter | |
|---|---|---|
| | Bacillus coli | Micro-organisms |
| 1 | *30 | 4,000 |
| 2 | 100—300 | 11,200 |
| 3 | *30 | 12,800 |
| 4 | 300 | 6,000 |
| 5 | 100 | 10,000 |
| 6 | 3,000—10,000 | 632,208 |
| 7 | absent | 2,440 |
| 8 | *10 | 4,000 |
| 9 | 10—30 | 35,000 |
| 10 | *10 | 3,600 |
| 11 | 30—100 | 5,400 |
| 12 | 300—1,000 | 96,000 |
| 13 | 30—100 | 8,600 |
| 14 | *10 | 4,800 |

* = less than

The standard of Grade A Milk is
No bacillus coli in 1/100 of a c.c.
Not more than 200,000 micro-organisms per c.c.

Samples numbered 8 and 10 are from the same supply as samples 4 and 5 and were taken two months later and after the producer had been warned as to the condition of his milk

Sample number 6 was taken from the supply of an institution and produced outside the area, the result was communicated to the institution and the supply stopped.

## Meat Supply.

The Junior Sanitary Inspector is the designated officer under the Public Health (Meat) Regulation, 1924,to receive notices of slaughter and to carry out the inspections of premises and carcases. He attended a meeting of the Butchers Federation before the regulations came into force and explained the requirements of the regulations and these are working satisfactorily.

All butchers have registered fixed days for slaughtering and notify all cases of slaughter at other than the fixed times,

The quality of the meat reaches a very high standard.

The number of carcases examined since the 1st of April, 1925, is given herewith and is 95 per cent of the number slaughtered.

| Oxen | Pigs | Sheep | Calves | Lambs | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 936 | 4038 | 2463 | 354 | 660 | 8451 |

This adds very considerably to the duties of this department and also to the hours of duty,especially during the summer months when most of the slaughtering is done in the evening or early morning. The regulations allow carcases to be moved at 7 a.m. which may have been killed the previous evening : this means that these have to be inspected either before 7 a.m. or between 8 and 10 p.m.

The system of marking has not been adopted.

## Disposal of Condemned Meat.

In the first half of the year it was buried at the refuse tip in lime but this was not satisfactory ; in the second half of the year it was taken to a knackers yard after being rendered unfit for the food of man.

The question of providing a Refuse Destructor or alternatively an incinerator is being considered.

## Meat Shops, Stores, Stalls and Vehicles.

SHOPS : the cleanliness and ventilation of these did not require much alteration, the only matter requiring consideration being precaution against contamination. The windows were usually kept open and meat hung on the outside ; no meat is now hung outside and glass windows or shutters are fitted to each shop. The shutters are sometimes taken down when the circumstances permit.

STORES : These were found in a fairly clean condition, six water closets were found within these stores and have been removed

STALLS : These are in a covered market but are open to contamination in dusty weather and on market days, they are not satisfactory at present and steps will have to be taken to prevent contamination of meat exposed there.

VEHICLES; the transport of meat in the town consists mainly of delivering joints to customers and this is either done in a basket provided with a cover or covered with linen cloths.

There is not a Public Slaughterhouse and the private ones are :

| | 1920 | 1-1-1925 | 31-12-1925 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Registered | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Licensed | 3 | 3 | 3 |

The following meat and other foods have been found unfit for the food of man :

| | Oxen | Pigs | Sheep |
|---|---|---|---|
| Whole Carcases ... ... | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| Fore or Hind Quarters ... ... | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Heads ... ... ... ... | 9 | 43 | 0 |
| Internal Organs ... ... ... | 77 | 88 | 98 |

Rabbits, 2

Peas, 38lbs — Tinned Fish, 7 tins
Tinned Meats, 8 tins — Tinned Fruit, 8 tins
Total weight of food found outfit ... 6,903 pounds

## Food Stores and Preparation Rooms

Sausage factories, curing rooms, wholesale food stores, sweet factories and cooked meat shops have been visited as to the sanitary condition, the chief defects found were lack of ventilation and dirty walls, ceilings and apparatus, but generally these places were found in a clean and wholesome condition.

## Food and Drug Acts.

The following samples have been taken during the year :

| | |
|---|---|
| Milk, | 61 |
| Cream ... | 5 |
| Butter ... | 13 |
| Margarine | 2 |
| Jam | 1 |
| Apples | 15 |
| Coffee ... | 2 |
| Sausages ... | 4 |
| Lard | 3 |
| Total | 106 |

The average content of milks was 3.39 fat and 8.73 solids not fat and 87.75 per cent water.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 samples contained | less than | 3 per cent of fat |
| 2 samples contained | | 3 ,, |
| 7 ,, ,, | | 3.1 ,, |
| 7 ,, ,, | | 3.2 ,, |
| 3 ,, ,, | | 3.3 ,, |
| 6 ,, ,, | | 3.4 ,, |
| 9 ,, ,, | | 3.5 ,, |
| 13 ,, ,, | | 3.6 to 4 per cent of fat |
| 5 ,, ,, | more than | 4 per cent of fat |

One skimmed milk contained Boric Acid at 0.04 per cent but proceeedings were not taken against the vendor as a satisfactory explanation was given. Proceedings were taken before the Court in two cases where the milk was found below standard, both defendants proved to have sold the milk as obtained from the cow and the cases were dismissed, in one case on payment of the cost by defendant. These samples contained 2.17 and 2.48 per cent of fat and 8.52 and 8.98 per cent of other solids. Four other samples contained less than 3 per cent of fat but the retailers were able to give a satisfactory explanation and the milk was found on re-sampling to be above the standard.

The other samples were genuine and free from preservatives.

## Condensed and Dried Milk.

No samples were taken during 1925.

## Milk and Cream Regulations.

The 61 samples of milk and 5 creams taken under the Food and Drugs Act were also examined as to compliance with these regulations and with the exception of the skimmed milk already referred to were found genuine. No cream was found to be sold as preserved cream.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The following table gives the number of cases of Infectious Diseases notified in the area during the years 1921 to 1925.

| Disease | 1921 | 1922 | 1923 | 1924 | 1925 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scarlet Fever ... ... | 4 | 29 | 57 | 26 | 52 |
| Diphtheria ... ... ... | 0 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 27 |
| Pneumonia ... ... ... | 0 | 10 | 3 | 21 | 25 |
| Cerebro Spinal Fever ... ... | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Erysipelas ... ... ... | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| Poliomyelitis ... ... ... | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ophthalmia Neonatorum ... | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Puerperal Fever ... ... | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Encephalitis Lethargica ... | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Tuberculosis, pulmonary ... | 44 | 35 | 28 | 34 | 30 |
| Tuberculosis, non-pulmonary ... | 2 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 5 |
| Totals | 58 | 87 | 109 | 96 | 151 |

It will be seen that the number notified during 1925 exceeds that for any year since 1921. The spread of Scarlet Fever was in my opinion due to slight and therefore unrecognised cases and this also applied to Diphtheria. I cannot too strongly urge parents and guardians in all cases of sore throat or rash to at once obtain medical advice.

Table giving housing conditions and occupations of patients notified as suffering from tuberculosis during 1925—

| CONDITIONS— | cases |
|---|---|
| Houses overcrowded as to air space ... ... | 4 |
| Houses unfit for habitation, bad ventilation, etc ... | 3 |
| Having well ventilated separate bedroom ... ... | 28 |
| **OCCUPATIONS—** | |
| Females in factories. ... ... ... ... | 9 |
| Males in factories ... ... ... ... | 3 |
| School children ... ... ... ... ... | 10 |
| Females, domestic and housewives ... ... ... | 12 |
| Males, outdoor ... ... ... ... | 1 |

The need of using the means of ventilation provided in factories, workshops, workrooms and dwelling houses, cannot be too strongly emphasized.

### Diphtheria, anti-toxin

A supply is kept at my residence and is supplied free to medical practitioners for necessitous cases.

### Examination of Specimens

This is undertaken by the Somerset County Council at their Laboratories at Weston-Super-Mare.

No return cases have been found. The Diphtheria carrier found during the year was isolated at home and treated by a medical practitioner.

### Disinfection.

This is done by Mr. Goad, under the supervision of this department. He also accompanies the driver of the ambulance to remove all cases to the Isolation Hospital, in addition to the Nurse or Matron. All rooms are sprayed with a solution of Izal and in some cases fumigated with formic lamps. The clothing is treated at the steam disinfecting station at the Isolation Hospital.

### Schick and Dick Test.

These have not been adopted but arrangements have been made to provide, free of cost in necessitous cases, Diphtheria Prophylactic Vaccine. This can be obtained by Medical Practitioners on request at my residence.

No vaccinations have been performed by the Medical Officer of Health during the year.

### Non-Notifiable Infectious Diseases.

Measles was very prevalent in 1924 and early in 1925 and Mumps at the end of 1923 and early 1924, both were of a mild type

Notices sent to schools by parents are handed to the School Nurse who visits each case and where necessary sees that medical attention is obtained.

### Mortality from Influenza.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| In | 1922 | there were | 11 | deaths |
| ,, | 1923 | ,, ,, | 3 | ,, |
| ,, | 1924 | ,, ,, | 5 | ,, |
| ,, | 1925 | ,, ,, | 7 | ,, |

No action has been taken by the Council to treat or nurse cases of this disease.

### Cancer, Deaths from

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| In | 1922 | there were | 21 | deaths |
| ,, | 1923 | ,, ,, | 26 | ,, |
| ,, | 1924 | ,, ,, | 25 | ,, |
| ,, | 1925 | ,, ,, | 27 | ,, |

## Bronchitis and Pneumonia.

In 1922 there were 38 deaths
„ 1923 „ „ 23 „
„ 1924 „ „ 36 „
„ 1925 „ „ 46 „

## Cleansing of Persons and Premises

The cleansing of verminous persons is carried out at the Workhouse and verminous premises disinfected and clothing either burnt or treated by steam disinfection.

## NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

### Table of Cases Notified During 1925.

| Disease | Total Cases Notified | Cases Admitted to Hospital | Total Deaths |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scarlet Fever ... | 52 | 42 | 0 |
| Diphtheria ... ... | 27 | 19 | 4 |
| Puerperal ... ... | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Pneumonia ... ... | 25 | 6 | 7 |
| Erysipelas ... ... | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Ophthalmia Neonatorum | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Cerebro Spinal Fever ... | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Encephalitis Lethargica | 1 | 0 | 1 |

The age of cases notified are as follows—

| | 0/1 | 1—2 | 2—3 | 3—4 | 4—5 | 5—10 | 10—15 | 15—20 | 20—35 | 35—45 | 45–65* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scarlet Fever ... | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 20 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Diphtheria ... | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Pneumonia ... | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 4 |
| Erysipelas ... | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| and the age of deaths— | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Diphtheria ... | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pneumonia ... | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 |

## TUBERCULOSIS

### New Cases and Mortality during 1925.

| Age Period | New cases | | | | Deaths | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pulmonary | | Non-pulmonary | | Pulmonary | | Non-pulmonary | |
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | ... |
| 1 | — | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | 1 | ... |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | — | 2 | — | — | — | ... |
| 10 | 2 | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | 1 |
| 15 | 2 | 9 | — | — | 1 | 4 | — | ... |
| 20 | 1 | 2 | — | — | 1 | 1 | — | 1 |
| 25 | — | 4 | — | — | 2 | 3 | — | ... |
| 35 | — | 7 | 1 | — | — | 1 | — | ... |
| 45 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | ... |
| 55 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | ... |
| 65* | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | ... |
| Totals | 6 | 24 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 2 |

No cases of deaths from tuberculosis have been found that have not been notified by a medical practitioner in accordance with the regulations.

### Public Health (Prevention) of Tuberculosis Regulations, 1925

All cases of Tuberculosis have been visited during the year, their occupations and residences ascertained and recorded, none were found to be handling milk or having any connection with the sale or production of milk.

Number of cases on the Tuberculosis Register

| | Males. | | Females | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pulmonary | Non Pulmonary | Pulmonary | Non Pulmonary |
| 1st Jan. 1925. | 96 | 5 | 76 | 7 |
| 31st. Dec. 1925. | 79 | 4 | 71 | 9 |

### Public Health Act 1925. Sect. 62.

It has not been necessary to take any action under this section.

## Maternity and Child Welfare.

This is carried out by the Somerset County Council, but a few particulars supplied by the District Health Visitor is given herewith

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of first visits made to new born babies. ... ... | 281 |
| ,, ,, babies on visiting list. ... ... ... ... | 695 |
| ,, ,, visits made to children between 1 and 5 years. | 3056 |
| ,, ,, Ante-natal visits | 90 |

## Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

Cases

| Notified | Treated at Home | In Hospital | Vision Unimpaired |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 4 | 0 | 4 |

| Vision Impaired | Total Blindness | Deaths |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Causes of Deaths

| | Males. | Females. |
|---|---|---|
| All Causes ... ... ... ... ... | 110 | 119 |
| Measles ... ... ... ... ... | 1 | — |
| Whooping Cough ... ... ... ... | 3 | 2 |
| Diphtheria ... ... ... ... | 1 | 3 |
| Influenza ... ... ... ... ... | 2 | 5 |
| Encephalitis Lethargica ... ... ... | 1 | — |
| Tuberculosis of respiratory system ... | 4 | 8 |
| Other Tuberculous Diseases ... ... | 1 | 2 |
| Cancer, Malignant Disease ... ... | 11 | 16 |
| Rheumatic Fever ... ... ... ... | — | 1 |
| Diabetes ... ... ... ... ... | 1 | 2 |
| Cerebral Hæmorrhage, etc ... ... | 2 | 4 |
| Heart Disease ... ... ... ... | 11 | 17 |
| Arterio-Sclerosis ... ... ... ... | 5 | — |
| Bronchitis ... ... ... ... | 16 | 10 |
| Pneumonia, all forms ... ... ... | 10 | 10 |
| Other Respiratory Diseases ... ... | 2 | 2 |
| Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum ... | — | 1 |
| Diarrhœa, etc (under 2 years) ... ... | 2 | — |
| Appendicitis and Typhlitis ... ... | 1 | 1 |
| Cirrhosis of Liver ... ... ... | 2 | — |
| Acute and Chronic Nephritis ... ... | 2 | 3 |
| Puerperal Sepsis ... ... ... ... | — | 1 |
| Other Accidents and Diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition ... ... ... ... | — | 1 |
| Congenital Debility and Malformation and Premature Birth ... ... ... | 5 | 6 |
| Suicide ... ... ... ... ... | 3 | ... |
| Other Deaths from Violence ... ... | 6 | 4 |
| Other Defined Diseases ... ... ... | 18 | 20 |

## SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

### Summary of Inspections made and defects remedied.

| | Inspections. | Defects Remedied |
|---|---|---|
| Under Housing Acts ... ... | 1085 | 549 |
| Under Public Health Acts. ... | 215 | 171 |
| Infectious Diseases, houses ... | 211 | |
| Meat and other Foods. ... ... | 3016 | |
| Milkshops and Dairies. ... ... | 97 | 19 |
| Bakehouses ... ... ... | 43 | 23 |
| Factories and Workshops ... | 75 | 24 |
| Drains, including new drains tested. | 120 | 41 |

## NUMBER OF TRADES REGISTERED OR LICENSED

| | Licensed | Registered |
|---|---|---|
| Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops | | |
| Retailers ... ... ... | 0 | 64 |
| Producers ... ... | 0 | 7 |
| Wholesalers ... ... | 0 | 1 |
| Slaughterhouses ... ... | 3 | 12 |
| Factories ... ... ... | 0 | 42 |
| Workshops ... ... ... | 0 | 153 |
| Common Lodging Houses ... ... | 0 | 3 |

## DISINFECTION

Houses disinfected, 95. Sets of Clothing and Bedding steamed. 97

## FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES

### Summary of Inspections.

| | Inspections. | Notices. |
|---|---|---|
| Factories | 28 | 14 |
| Workshops | 41 | 7 |
| Workplaces | 6 | 0 |

### Summary of Defects

| | Found and Remedied. |
|---|---|
| Want of cleanliness | 10 |
| Other Nuisances | 1 |
| Sanitary accommodation | |
| Insufficient. | 6 |
| Unsuitable or defective | 8 |

### Outworkers

These number 25, one case of infectous disease has occurred in an outworker's house during the year and the work stopped

## STATEMENT AS TO THE NATURE OF DEFECTS REMEDIED UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND HOUSING ACTS

(Each defect only counted once for each house)

| Defect | Under Public Health Act | Under Housing Act |
|---|---|---|
| Overcrowding | 2 | 17 |
| Food Stores, ventilation provided | 0 | 289 |
| Water Closets, defective repaired | 22 | 77 |
| Water Closets, new provided | 15 | 28 |
| Ditto, provided with flushing apparatus | 13 | 136 |
| Water Taps, separate to house provided | 7 | 60 |
| Water Taps put inside house | 0 | 28 |
| Waste Sinks, new provided | 11 | 76 |
| Ditto defective repaired | 3 | 20 |
| Ventilation and light, insufficient | 8 | 58 |
| Dampness, acute | 3 | 17 |
| Handrail, provided to stairs | 2 | 23 |
| Drains, new | 18 | 3 |
| Drains, repaired | 18 | 2 |
| Wash-houses, provided | 0 | 1 |
| Animals, kept so as to be a nuisance | 3 | 0 |
| Accummulations | 12 | 0 |
| Manure Receptacles provided | 8 | 0 |
| Dwelling Houses, unsanitary condition of internal walls and ceilings | 52 | 392 |
| Business Premises, unsanitary state | 13 | 0 |
| Defective Floors | 23 | 267 |
| Walls and Roofs | 31 | 89 |
| Plaster | 25 | 92 |
| Windows | 24 | 70 |
| Pavings to yard | 11 | 89 |
| Eavesgutters & downpipes | 31 | 39 |
| Fireplaces and furnaces | 24 | 87 |
| Doors | 2 | 48 |
| Chimneys | 15 | 28 |
| Staircases | 7 | 15 |
| Other defects | 4 | 11 |

## RAINFALL: BRIDGWATER AND ASHFORD.

Table giving rainfall registered at Blake Gardens, Bridgwater, and at the Pumping Station, Ashford.

| | BRIDGWATER | | | | ASHFORD | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Month | Total Depth | Greatest fall in 24 hours | | No. of days with 0.1 or more | Total Depth | Greatest fall in 24 hours | | No. of days with 0.1 or more |
| | Inches | Inches | date | | inches | inches | date | |
| January ... | 2.54 | 0.70 | 1 | 19 | 2.92 | 0.82 | 1 | 16 |
| February | 3.41 | 0.65 | 25 | 21 | 3.74 | 0.60 | 25 | 21 |
| March ... | 0.39 | 0.10 | 25 | 9 | 0.33 | 0.18 | 26 | 4 |
| April ... | 2.38 | 0.61 | 5 | 18 | 1.80 | 0.35 | 15 | 11 |
| May ... | 3.44 | 0.42 | 3 | 19 | 3.37 | 0.50 | 26 | 13 |
| June ... | 0.08 | 0.08 | 1 | 1 | — | 0.00 | — | — |
| July ... | 2.33 | 0.48 | 21 | 18 | 2.13 | 0.63 | 21 | 8 |
| August ... | 3.12 | 0.53 | 1 | 18 | 3.70 | 0.60 | 19 | 15 |
| September | 2.76 | 1.19 | 19 | 17 | 3.75 | 1.45 | 19 | 12 |
| October | 2.70 | 0.75 | 19 | 14 | 2.44 | 0.75 | 19 | 11 |
| November | 2.58 | 0.52 | 6 | 11 | 2.49 | 1.10 | 2 | 7 |
| December | 3.66 | 0.74 | 19 | 19 | 3.35 | 0.60 | 19 | 12 |
| Total | 29.39 | | | 184 | 30.02 | | | 130 |

| | Bridgwater | Ashford |
|---|---|---|
| No rain fell on ... | 181 days | 235 days |
| The wettest month was | December | September |
| The driest month was | June | June |
| Greatest fall in 24 hours | Sept. 19th. (1.19 in) | Sept. 19th. (1.45 in.) |